

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 01862 060509Z

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ACTION A-01

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP (WYATT, WENDELL)
SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL VISIT

REF: STATE 176141

1. CONGRESSMAN WYATT HAD SUCCESSFUL TWO-DAY VISIT TO DAMASCUS, SEPTEMBER 2-3. AMBASSADOR HELD LUNCHEON FOR CONGRESSMAN TO MEET NEW EMBASSY STAFF. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY PRIVATE TOUR OF OMAYYAD MOSQUE, AZM PALACE, AND OLD MARKET AREA ORGANIZED BY THE SECRETARIAT OF SYRIAN NATIONAL PARLIAMENT.

2. IN EVENING CONGRESSMAN HELD ONE-HOUR CONVERSATION WITH MOHAMMED ALI AL-HALABI, SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY. DURING CONVERSATION WYATT EMPHASIZED HIS BELIEF THAT AMERICAN POLICY IN M.E. UNDER FORD WOULD BE CONTINUATION OF POLICY OF NIXON ADMINISTRATION. SPEAKER WELCOMED VISIT OF WYATT AND REPEATED REMARKS HE PREVIOUSLY MADE TO CONGRESSMAN FINDLEY THAT HE HOPED THERE WOULD BE MANY SUCH VISITS BY MEMBERS OF AMERICAN CONGRESS. HALABI POINTED OUT THAT SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM HAD DISCUSSED WITH SECRETARY POSSIBILITY OF VISITS BETWEEN LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF TWO COUNTRIES. SPEAKER EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL HOPE THAT SUCH VISITS CAN BE ARRANGED IN NEAR FUTURE. MEETING WITH SPEAKER FOLLOWED BY MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN OF FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, ADNAN KELANI. KELANI HOSTED DINNER LATER EVENING OF SEPT 2 FOR WYATT TO MEET SEVERAL OTHER MEMBERS OF PARLIA-

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PAGE 02 DAMASC 01862 060509Z

MENT.

3. SEPT 3 CONGRESSMAN WYATT VISITED OFFICES OF UNRWA AND THEN TOURED JARMANA REFUGEE CAMP. HE SAW BOTH ORIGINAL SECTION FOR 1948 REFUGEES AND NEWER SECTION BUILT SINCE 1967 TO HOUSE DISPLACED REFUGEES--1948 REFUGEES WHO IN 1967 LEFT CAMPS NEAR KUNEITRA.

4. IT WAS PARTICULARLY USEFUL AT THIS JUNCTURE TO HAVE MEMBER OF CONGRESS HERE TO EMPHASIZE TO SYRIANS CONTINUITY OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. CONGRESSMAN WYATT'S VISIT WAS ALSO USEFUL IN GIVING MISSION FURTHER OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH SYRIAN LEGISLATORS. THEIR OBVIOUS INTEREST IN EXCHANGE VISITS IS ONE AREA WE HOPE TO BUILD ON AS WE PUT TOGETHER CULTURAL PACKAGE.
MURPHY

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